

Action Research Training for Second Year School Counseling Mentoring Program

Introduction and Overview

What is P.R.B.E or Action Research?

Partnerships (Program + Personnel)
(for)
Results
Based
Evaluations

Results Based Evaluation

= P.R.B.E or Action Research

- **Comprehensive School Counseling Program Evaluation:**
The overall evaluation process includes program evaluation, personnel evaluation, and results evaluation. Action research focuses on the results evaluation component.
- **Overview: Program + Personnel = Results**
 - **Program (School Counseling Curriculum) + Personnel (You) = Results**
 - **Results Evaluation = a way to evaluate, document, and show results of school counseling intervention programs**
 - **Accountability with Data = Results**

The Importance of School Counselors Evaluating Their Programs

1. To improve counseling services for all students
2. To be accountable for a comprehensive school counseling program that provides interventions which benefit students and the school community
3. To increase one's ability to be a reflective, investigative professional
4. To advocate for the ongoing support needed to operate effective programs
5. To increase public acceptance, trust, and support by providing evidence of the effectiveness of programs

Important to Remember!

- Not all interventions are going to show improvement or positive influence
- What one perceives to be a great intervention or activity may be enjoyable without having any influence on targeted areas such as student achievement, motivation, attendance, or behavior
- Some of the best projects produce results that assist counselors in changing their programs to address needs or allow counselors to think differently about interventions attempted
- Action research provides data that defines interventions attempted and allows one to become aware of strengths or weaknesses of a program or activity
- Great ideas come from existing studies so take advantage of great ideas!

IDEAS!

An action-research approach for conducting results-based program evaluation

- Identify
- Describe
- Existing data
- Analyze
- Summarize
- Now use the data!

Identify

- A problem the school counselor has control over (you can do something about).
- School Improvement Plans (SIP) typically focus on areas of concerns that can be addressed from school counselor interventions; (attendance, achievement, behavior etc.)

Describe

- Thoroughly describe the problem or issue using “SIMS”
 - Students
 - Interventions
 - Measurements
 - Settings

Existing Data

- If available, use existing data which your school has already collected

or

- Collect your own data and create your own measuring instrument

Analyze

- Analyze your data by using
 - Scores
 - Means
 - Percents
- Make a graph
 - *a graph (visual) is worth a thousand words*



Summarize

- Summarize your findings in a presentation by including:
 - A statement of the problem
 - What you did in response to the problem
 - What you learned
 - What you plan to do about the problem to help students and to improve your program

Now Use the data!

- To communicate to stakeholders (parents, colleagues, administrators, school boards)
 - To make a positive difference in the lives of students by evaluating and improving counseling programs
- ❖ Following is an example of an Action Research Presentation by Julie Watson, Evangel School Counseling Graduate, who was one of the first mentor program completers to use IDEAS! Permission for use has been granted by author.

Identify

- **Identify problem(s) with a question:** Can small-group counseling reduce the increasing percentage of students referred to the office for on-going discipline problems in the school district?
 - **Associated problems with on-going discipline issues**
 - Attendance problems
 - Low grades

Describe

- **Describe:** School counselors attempt to effectively use time and resources to serve as many students as possible. Classroom counseling lessons help this process by being preventative in nature; however, there is a percentage of students who experience problems or situations that are not able to be addressed through a whole group approach.

Describe continued...

- Small group counseling is often an effective intervention targeted at particular populations in a school setting. It is the aim of this research to identify students with on-going discipline problems and to provide small group sessions as an intervention.
- By applying group counseling interventions, the counselor intends to reduce discipline notices and increase GPAs and attendance.

Describe Variables

- Targeted variables are to reduce discipline referrals, raise attendance rates, and raise student academic grades. These are to be measured with the dependent variables of discipline notices, daily attendance records, and grade point averages.

SIMS (Part of Describe)

Students

- Students to be identified through collecting data from discipline notes sent home over each of the four quarters during the previous school year
- Students receiving two or more per quarter to be defined as the targeted population

Interventions

- Facilitate ten small structured group sessions. By applying the intervention with students, the intention is to reduce discipline notices, to improve GPAs, and to improve attendance.

Measurements

- Simple data analysis to be completed by comparing
 - Average number of discipline notes sent home per quarter before and after intervention
 - Average attendance rates before and after intervention
 - Pre and post surveys to be calculated through averaging teacher, student, and parent responses on a Likert Scale to questions that measure visible frustration and anger in students



Settings

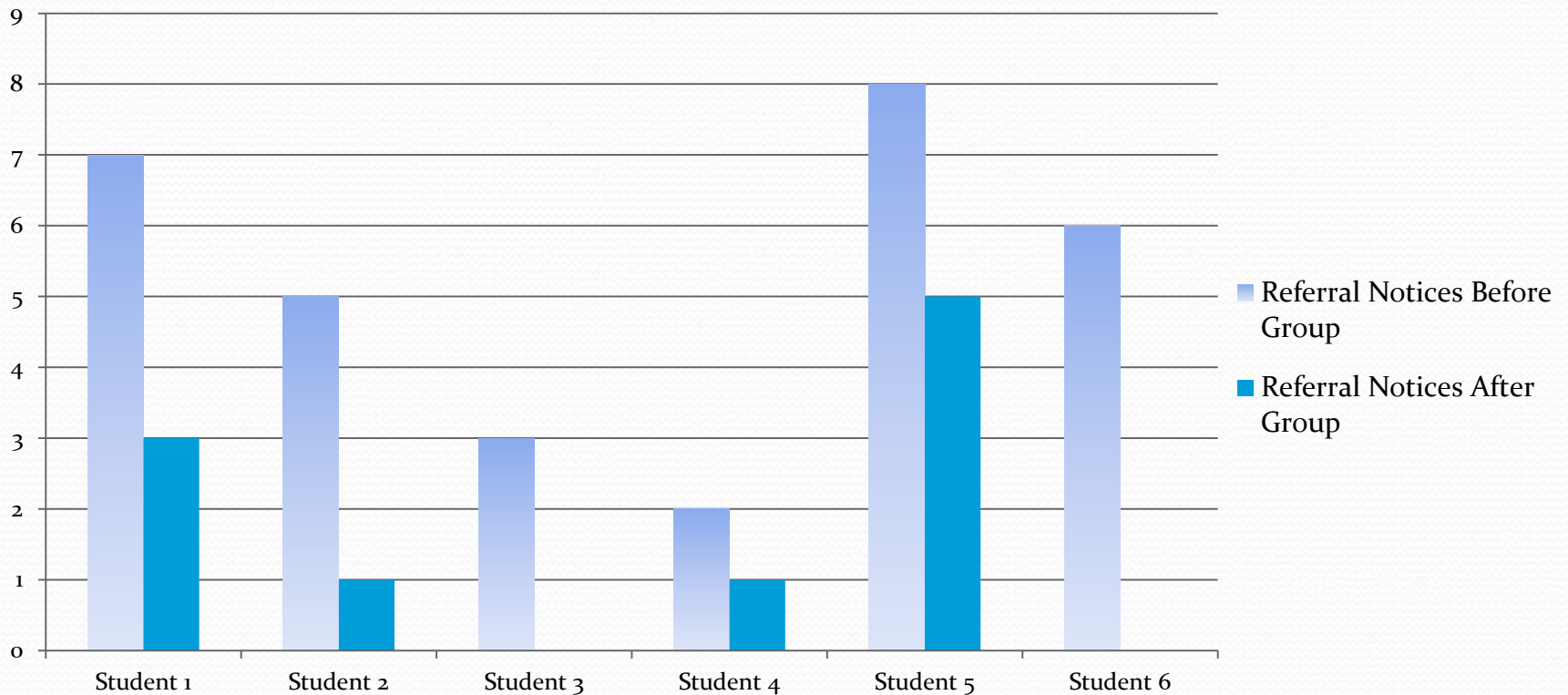
- All small group sessions to be conducted in the school by a school counselor

Existing Data

- Total population of students for the 2007-2008 = 212 students.
 - 2007-2008: 247 discipline notices sent home
 - 2006-2007: 137 discipline notices sent home
- Average GPA for high school students with two or more discipline notices for the 2007-2008 school year was 2.2
- Average attendance rate for students with two or more discipline notices:
 - 2007-2008 : 89%.
 - 2006-2007: 88%.

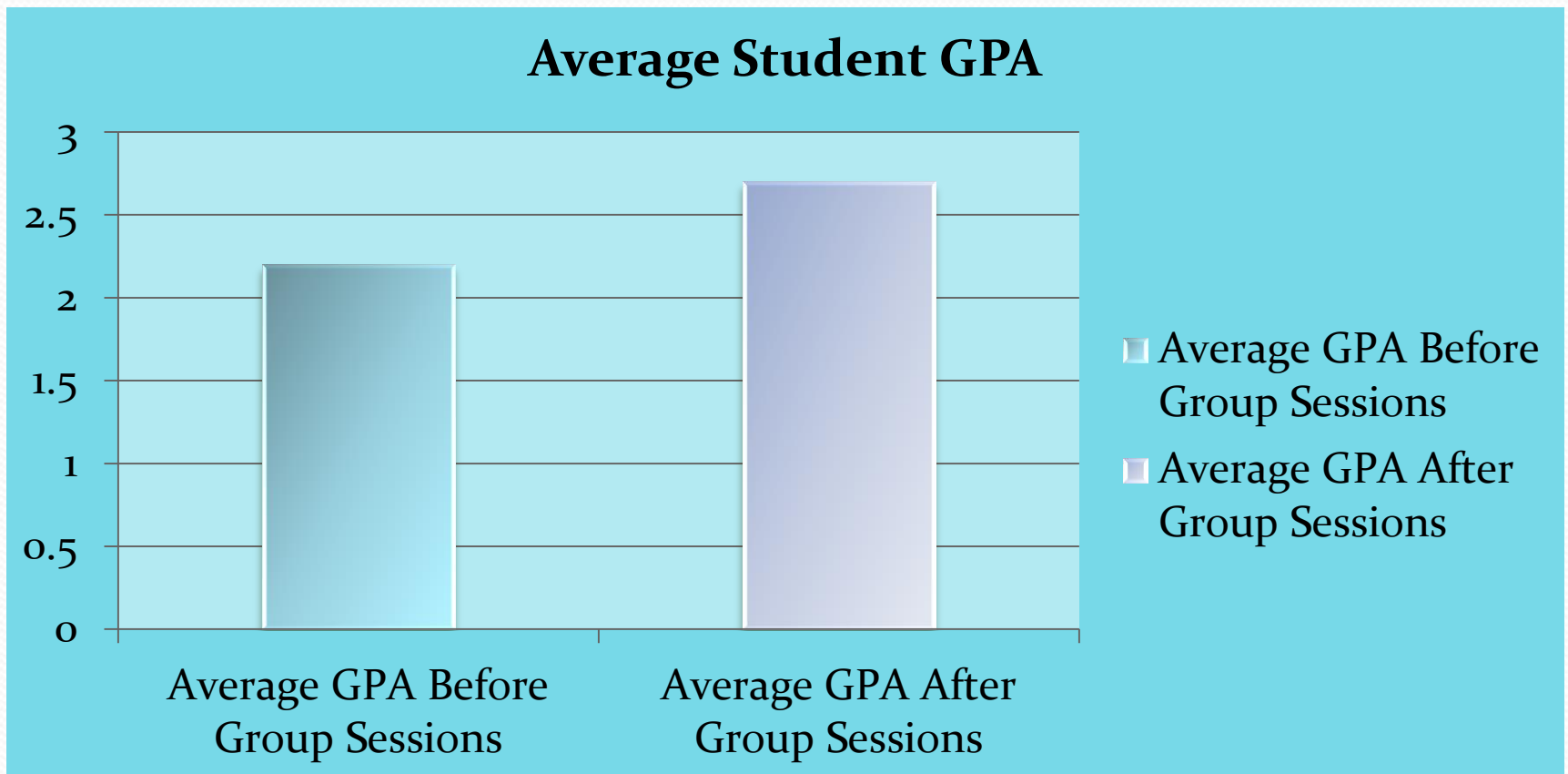
Analyze

- Comparison of Referral Notices



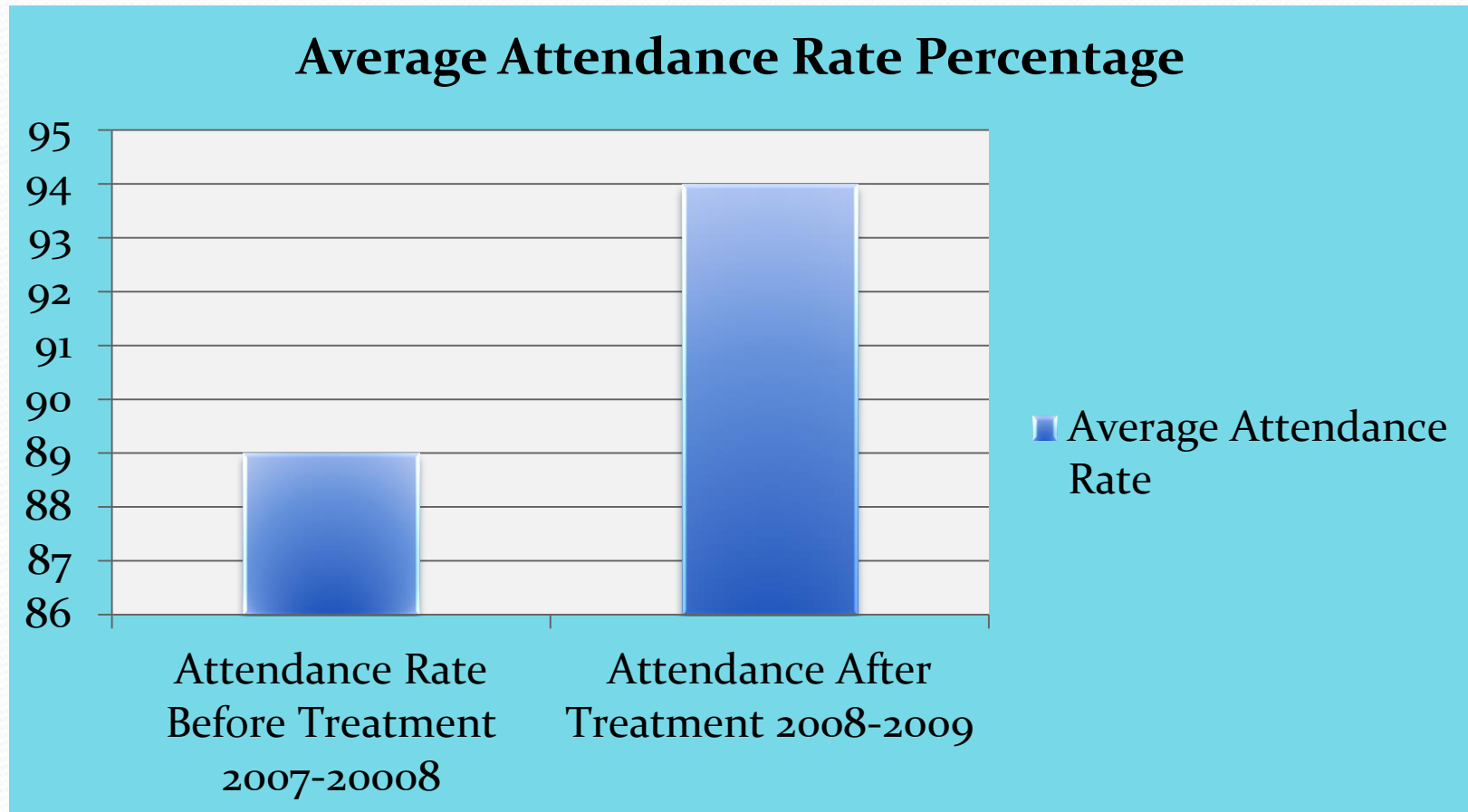
Analyze Continued

- Comparison of GPA



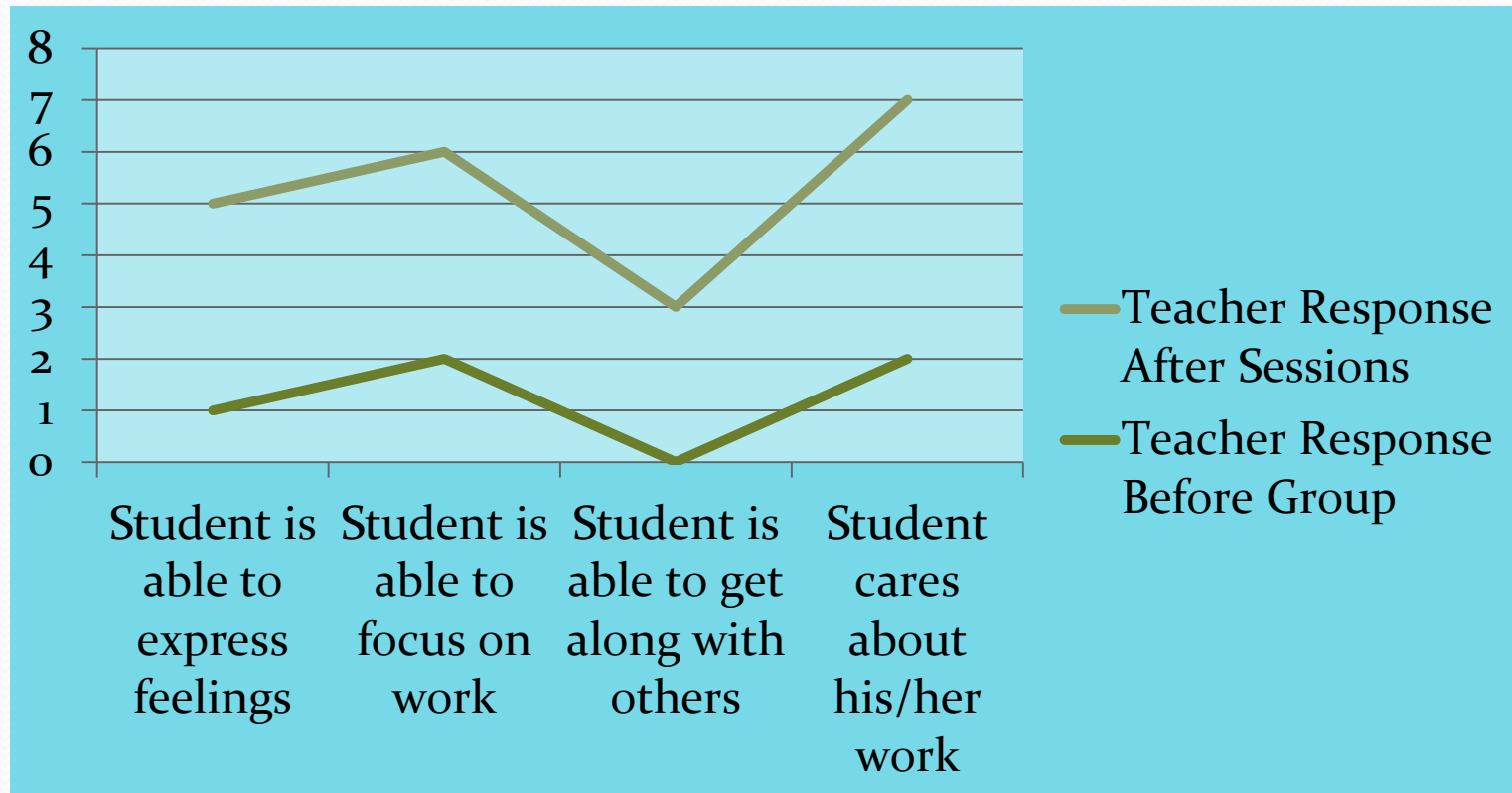
Analyze Continued

- Comparison of Attendance Rates



Analyze Continued

- Teachers' surveys



Summarize

Small group interventions benefited students in several ways.

- As the charts in the previous slides indicate:
 - Attendance rates went up
 - Average GPAs increased
 - Teachers reported students' behaviors improved

Possible benefits for the district include increased state funding for attendance rates, higher scores on standardized tests, and higher rates of teacher satisfaction with student behavior.

Now Use the Data!

- Administration, staff, and school board presentations
- Data documentation for counseling evaluations
- Data documentation for increased fund requisitions for counseling resources (increased attendance means more money for the district, justifying more money allowed for intervention services)

Some Principles of Graphing

- K.I.S.R. (Keep It Simple and Relevant)
 - Remember your audience
 - Control the appearance of font style, size, and titles; make it easy to read
 - Graphing is more of an “art” than a “science”
- ❖ *Counseling is both an art and a science!*

Summarize Data by Charts

- Use Excel
- Use numerous free web resources for tabulating data

Available Online Resources

- **Online Action Research (PRBE) Training: School Counseling Program Evaluation**
 - A **Series of Short Courses** that introduce school counselors to the evaluation model, Program + Personnel = Results and then guides them in development of a results-based project.
- **Results Evaluation: IDEAS & Data Analysis for School Counselors**
 - A **Series of Videos** that demonstrate further how to use Microsoft Excel to analyze data
 - **<http://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/school-counseling/counseling-podcasts-and-videos>**

State Template

- Following is a recommended sample template for consistency when submitting a PowerPoint for DESE review.
- Participants may submit more than eight slides and take creative ownership of their presentations with various applications such as video inserts or links.
- Participants may choose a different format (Prezi, Movie Maker, etc.) than a standard PPT with the awareness that not all formats are easily accessed or able to be downloaded by all readers.

IDEAS! Presentation Slides

- Slide 1: Title of Project with Your Contact Information
- Slide 2: **Identify** Problem or Issue
- Slide 3: **Describe** (**SIMS**) Students, Interventions, Measurements, and Settings
- Slide 4: **Existing Data**
- Slide 5 and 6: **Analyze** Data
- Slide 7: **Summarize** Findings
- Slide 8: Implications and Follow-up Recommendations!

Improving Attendance in an 8th Grade Class

John Doe

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Identify

- Some 8th grade students are struggling with attendance
 - 1st Quarter: 8th grade attendance rate was 83%
 - 25 students were attending < 75% of the time

Describe (SIMS)

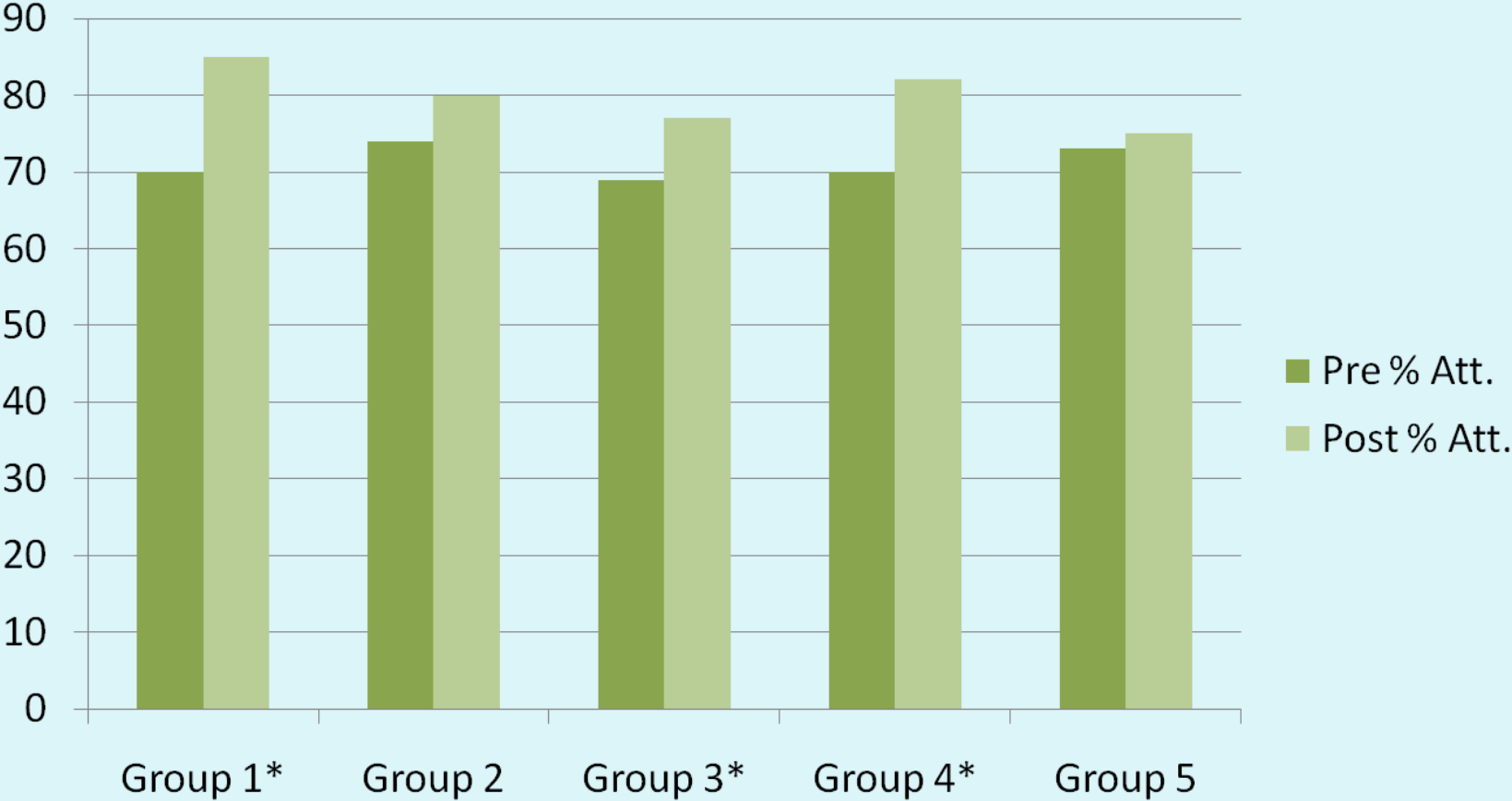
- **S**tudents: 25, 8th grade students currently attending <75%
- **I**ntervention: Implementation of the “Going to School” Curriculum Program
 - 16 sessions to address time management and planning
- **M**easurement: Attendance Rates
 - Evaluate attendance before and after groups
 - Compare to rates of 25 other 8th grade students
- **S**etting: All small group sessions will be conducted in the school by a professional school counselor

Existing or Accumulated Data

- 5 small groups of 4-6 students
 - Each group met weekly during or after school in 2nd & 3rd Qs
 - 22 of the 25 students completed the groups
 - On average, counselors facilitated 13 sessions w/each group (64 total)
 - On average, students attended about 10 sessions each
 - Counselors' notes suggest students appeared engaged
 - Counselors perceived Sessions 4 & 5 were the easiest to facilitate and most useful to students
- Front office monitored attendance for participating students and 22 other randomly selected 8th graders

Analyze Data

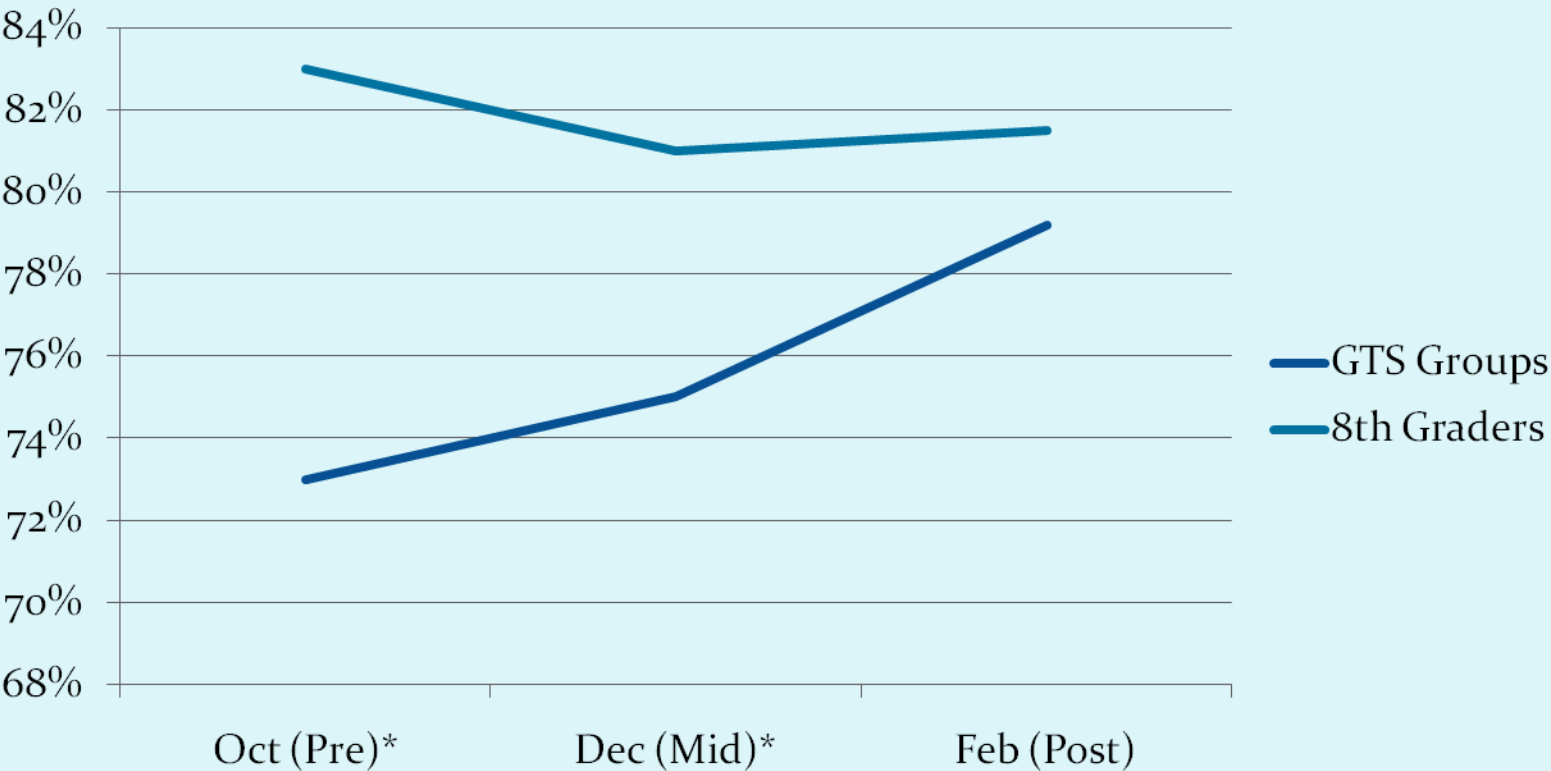
Results: Attendance in each group improved



*Statistically Significant, $p < .05$

Analyze Data

Results: Going to School (GTS) group attendance on target with other 8th grade students



*Statistically Significant, $p < .05$

SUMMARIZE

- “Going to School” groups were effective in increasing percentage of attendance for most students
- 3 of the 5 groups met an attendance goal of 80% and 3 of the 5 groups had a significant increase in attendance
- A total of 144 more days of attendance during 2nd & 3rd quarter than 1st quarter
- \$50 a day in state aid for each student resulted in \$6200 additional dollars for 4th quarter over the 1st quarter of the school year

Use your Data!


Implications and Recommendations

- Counselors to continue to monitor students' attendance this quarter and next year to evaluate possible long-term impacts
- Counselors to implement and evaluate group interventions again next year to build additional support for effectiveness
- Counselors to share findings with school and community stakeholders
- Counselors and administrators to investigate additional funding opportunities to continue and to expand groups
- If groups continue to be successful, classroom implementation of "Going to School" should be explored



**ADDITIONAL ACTION RESEARCH
(PRBE) SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS
CAN BE ACCESSED AT:**

[https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/school-counseling/administrators#Probe Reports](https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/school-counseling/administrators#ProbeReports)



THANK YOU
For Reviewing the
Action Research Overview
PowerPoint.